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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, Rev. John L. Beaver, who is the national chaplain for the American Legion.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty Father, we thank You for life, truth, and love which comes from You, for love because it embraces all of us and for Your comforting assurance that You are guiding our great Nation.

We humbly ask for Your light of wisdom to be given to each Member of the Senate so that they may discern what is truth from error. Guide and direct our beloved Senators from across this Nation with a compassionate heart in making difficult decisions. Father, help us to learn and to know Your will in all things.

Lord, we ask for Your protective shield around our military men and women. Be with their families as they wait eagerly for their safe return and give comfort to our wounded warriors in body, mind, and spirit. Comfort those who are now grieving the loss of their loved ones.

Bless all our veterans and military organizations who serve from their hearts. Strengthen us in heart, mind, and spirit as we serve You, our God, and our beloved Nation. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 2, 2010.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have a few things to say, but it is my understanding that the distinguished Senator from Maine wishes to make a unanimous-consent request, so I will yield to her for that purpose.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Madam President, and I thank the distinguished Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 4691

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, on my own behalf and on behalf of numerous members of the Republican caucus who have expressed concerns to me, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4691, with 1 hour of debate equally divided between the leaders or their designees, and that following the use or yielding back of time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage.

Madam President, this is the House-passed bill that extends for 30 days the following expiring provisions: unemployment insurance, which is so important to those who are struggling—there are 500 Mainers whose benefits expired on Sunday; the COBRA health insurance extension subsidies for the unemployed; important flood insurance; highway funding; small business loans; the provisions of the American Recovery Act that include those small business loan provisions; the doctors fix. If we do not act, physicians all across this country are going to have a 21-percent cut in their Medicare reimbursements.

I hope we can act together for the American people. Again, I want to emphasize that this issue is so important to Senators on both sides of the aisle. Many of my colleagues have expressed concerns to me that this was not done last week when it should have been done. So, Madam President, I do propose the unanimous-consent request.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, Madam President, I appreciate the efforts of my friend, the Senator from Maine, and I would hope my

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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